

S E R M O N,

DELIVERED AT CONCORD,

B E F O R E

The Hon. General Court

OF THE STATE OF

NEW HAMPSHIRE,

AT THE

ANNUAL ELECTION,

HOLDEN ON THE FIRST WEDNESDAY IN JUNE,
M.DCC.XCI.

BY THE REV. ISRAEL EVANS, A. M.
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN CONCORD.

CONCORD:

PRINTED BY GEORGE HOUGH, FOR THE HONOUR-
ABLE GENERAL COURT.

M. DCC. XCI,



State of Newhampshire.

*In the House of Representatives, June 3,
1791.*

VOTED,

THAT Mr. Foster, Mr. Parker, and Mr. Macgregore, with such of the honourable Senate as they may appoint, be a Committee to present the Reverend Mr. Evans with the thanks of the General Court, for his excellent Discourse delivered yesterday before the Court, and request a copy of the same for the Press.

Sent up for concurrence,

NATH. PEABODY, Speaker.

In Senate, the same day.

Read and concurred: Mr. Dow, joined.

J. PEARSON, Sec'ry.



GALATIANS V. I.

*Stand fast, therefore, in the Liberty where-
with CHRIST hath made us free, and
be not entangled again with the yoke of
Bondage.*

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS,

WE have numbered more than twenty-seven years since your opposition to a foreign system of heavy oppression began. The year 1764 has been rendered memorable, on the one side by the folly and injustice of a hated stamp-act, and, on the other, by the resisting energy of the patriot sons of Freedom. From that period, the genius of American liberty, by combating distress, misery, and hosts of enemies, waxed strong in her own defence, and hath crowned more than THREE MILLIONS of mankind with national independence.---Instructed in the school of Freedom, the inhabitants of these confederate States combined their strength in the protection of the rights of men. THEY KNEW AND THEY FELT THAT FREEMEN WILL BE FREE. By their exertions, under the favour of a righteous providence, they have established a wise constitution of federal government: they have reach-
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ed the consummation of every patriot's wish, the glory and felicity of their country; and now enjoy a free system of political happiness, such as gives pleasure, and even transport, to the enlightened patriots of many nations; and has made, perhaps, no small advancement of joy among the benevolent hosts of Heaven: for, to every benevolent and virtuous being, the freedom and happiness of the human race is a most pleasing consideration.---But there are some men, with the means of public prosperity in their possession, who do not realize the value of Freedom: they partake of the common blessings of a free people, and yet are not conscious of national felicity.---This, however, does not lessen the real worth of Liberty; for in every situation of life, it is the richest inheritance. In true Liberty is included, Freedom, both moral and civil; it has nothing in contemplation but the happiness of mankind, and therefore it is the principal glory of man; and, in this world, there can be nothing more dignified, or more exalted. Without civil and religious Liberty, man is indeed a poor, enslaved, wretched, miserable creature; neither his life, nor his property, nor the use of his conscience, is secured to him; but he is subjected to some inhuman tyrant, whose will is his law, and who *presumes to govern men without their consent.*—But let not this gale of honest zeal carry us beyond the recollection of our text.

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In the discussion of the text, it may be observed, that the word LIBERTY, in this place, does principally imply a freedom from the injunctions of the ceremonial law. This freedom our Saviour purchased for all Christians; and in this freedom the apostle Paul exhorted the Galatians, and all the followers of Christ, to *stand fast*. When we consider the age, and state of the world, in which the Jews lived, and their fondness of show, idolatry, and superstition, we shall find that their religion was well suited to their genius and temper. The religion of the Jews had a very pointed allusion to the character and office of the Messiah, and was therefore wisely enjoined. But those typical and ritual services, after the coming of Christ, having fulfilled their design, became unnecessary. "These, said the apostle Paul, were a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ, who hath abolished the law of commandments contained in ordinances." Without the external pomp and show of the Jewish religion, the gospel recommends the worship of God in spirit and truth. The doctrines of the gospel are calculated to promote good will and liberty among men; and where their genuine influence has been extended, mankind have been rendered more happy: they have been instructed, civilized, humanized, and made free. "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle,

tle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."---
The true spirit of the Gospel contains the true spirit of Liberty. We may be assured, that under this benevolent institution, useful liberty of every kind is recommended by the spirit of our text.

ALTHO my text, in the original meaning, did not respect civil so much as religious liberty, yet I hope I shall not seem to misuse it by making it the foundation of a discourse on Liberty in general.

A FEW observations on the nature of religious Liberty, shall constitute the *first* part of this discourse.

I. RELIGIOUS Liberty is a divine right, immediately derived from the Supreme Being, without the intervention of any created authority. It is the natural privilege of worshipping God in that manner which, according to the judgment of men, is most agreeable and pleasing to the divine character. As the conscience of man is the image and representative of God in the human soul; so to him alone it is responsible. In justice, therefore, the feelings and sentiments of conscience, and the moral practice of religion, must be independent of all finite beings. Nor hath the all-wise Creator invested any order of
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men with the right of judging for their fellow-creatures in the great concerns of religion. Truth and religion are subjects of determination entrusted to all men; and it is a privilege of all men to judge and determine for themselves.

RELIGIOUS Liberty secures every man, both in his person and property, from suffering on account of his peculiar sentiments in religion; and no practice which flows purely from this fountain of natural right can justly be punished. But when a man adopts such notions as, in their practice, counteract the peace and good order of society, he then perverts and abuses the original Liberty of man; and were he to suffer for thus disturbing the peace of the community, and injuring his fellow-citizens, his punishment would be inflicted not for the exercise of a virtuous principle of conscience, but for violating that universal law of rectitude and benevolence which was intended to prevent one man from injuring another. To punish men for entertaining various religious sentiments, is to assume a power to punish them for doing what God gave them an unalienable right to do. For neither the principles of reason, nor the doctrines of the gospel, which are the perfection of reason, have empowered any man to judge for himself and for another man also: this is religious tyranny; this

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is to controul another man's conscience : and to controul any man's conscience is to contradict that true principle of eternal justice which Jesus Christ published to the world : *Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.*

SUFFER me a little to illustrate this maxim of primitive justice. We will suppose, that some man should endeavour to prove, that he had a right to determine what our religious principles and sentiments ought to be ; but ; how would he be pleased when his own arguments should be turned against himself ? Should this man, who was unwilling to allow us the free exercise of rational, accountable creatures, be forced, in the change of human affairs, to reside among a people very different from him in matters of religion ; he however behaving himself as an honest and peaceable man, and, as a good subject of civil society, serving the interest of the country ; ; would he not think it very unjust and tyrannical to be persecuted for his religious opinions---imprisoned, deprived of his property, and finally condemned to die, only because he could not with a clear conscience worship as they did ? Only the Supreme Governour of mankind has a perfect right to receive the homage of the human mind ; it is his peculiar prerogative to controul the consciences of men by his infinitely
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wise and equitable laws. True religion must therefore be founded in the inward persuasion and conviction of the mind; for without this it cannot be that *reasonable service* which is pleasing to God. The human understanding cannot be convinced by external violence of any kind; nor can the immaterial spirit be influenced by the laws of men, unless they correspond with the goodness, justice, and mercy, of our blessed Creator, our most bountiful Benefactor, and our all-wise and righteous Judge.---Here joy and gratitude prompt me to say, Oh happy people, who live in this land and in this age of religious Liberty! here every man has equally the freedom of choosing his religion; and may *sit every man under his vine, and under his figtree*; and, on the account of religion, *none shall make them afraid*. Let us, my friends and fellow-citizens, *Stand fast, therefore, in the religious Liberty wherewith God and Christ hath made us free*.

II. WITH submission to the professional knowledge of my political Fathers, I will now venture to make some observations on the nature and principles of civil Liberty. These observations shall be included within the following particulars.

1. IN this happy land of light and liberty, it is a truth fully established, that all men are by nature

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equally

equally free. From this principle of natural Liberty we derive an indefeasible right of being governed by our own civil constitutions. WE THE PEOPLE are the source of all legislative authority. Upon this just, benevolent, pleasing, and even delightful principle, the constitutions, the laws, and the governments, of these federal States, will *stand fast*. All men who understand the nature, and feel the spirit, of such principles, are self-instructed to be their own Legislators, either in one collected body, or by representation. When all the people can assemble, and personally contribute their aid in framing constitutions and laws for the government of themselves, then their liberty is most natural and most perfect. But since great loss of time, much expense, and many inconveniences, would attend this mode of legislation, the people have agreed, in free States, to select from the whole body, some of their brethren, whom they invest with legislative power. What shall be transacted by these delegates or representatives, consistently with the constitution of the people, must be acknowledged as the act of the people. In conformity to this plan, the people keep as near the possession of natural Liberty, as is convenient and really useful; and while they are truly virtuous, they will enjoy as much perfect Liberty as is necessary to preserve peace, establish justice, and secure political happiness.—

happiness.—I shall only add further, under this particular, that when a free people have, according to their constitution, determined to legislate by representatives, they should take great care that the representation may be fully adequate to the importance and welfare of the people; the elections should also be perfectly free, and sufficiently frequent.

2. The elections should be conducted agreeably to the principles of justice and honour. The privilege of electing freely, or being freely elected, is one of the fairest features in the pure image of natural Liberty. A free and unbiassed election of the best and the wisest men, is a certain evidence of the flourishing state of Liberty.—On the other hand, when elections are under dishonest influence, and men can be sold and bought, it is a most lamentable sign that Liberty is either in a deep sleep, or in a dangerous decay. When this *birth-right* of the people is bartered for something as mean as a mess of *pottage*—when they neglect and despise this natural and constitutional right—they then lose their share and influence in that government of which they were the original foundation. Having neglected that security which at first existed in themselves, and having counteracted the very design of that social compact which was intended to secure them from every species of political injury, they turn TRAITORS to their God who

who made them free; and for want of exercising that natural power which their Creator gave them, their *glory will depart*: and, having the hearts of slaves, they will wear the livery and endure the misery of slaves.——But I am not willing to spend time in representing this horrible image of slavish misery. This assembly is the image and representation of a free state. I have the honour, I have the felicity, of speaking before men who are too well acquainted with the blessings of Liberty to neglect or despise any of the natural or constitutional rights of freemen.

3. THE public happiness of a people is promoted, not only by the freedom of elections, but also by the wisdom and goodness of the laws. A wise and a good representation will produce good laws. Good and wise men, who are clothed with the natural power of their constituents, will study to unite closely the interest of the country and the power of the laws; and where the representation is good, the laws will appear to carry with them the voice and common consent of the people. The laws made after this manner, are the laws of the people, and prove that they are free, and that they virtually legislate for themselves.——I leave this particular, after observing, that the public happiness should be the first duty and the prime object of all legislators; and that, in every free and virtuous state, this is the pole-star of legislation.

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4. It is the duty of the people, in conformity to the principles of Liberty, to choose men to superintend the executive department of the nation: for no man, in a free state, can justly claim the authority of an executive magistrate, without the voice and consent of the people. In the exercise of their own natural power, by their constitution, they must appoint their chief magistrate to this place of honour and trust. In this respect, it may be said, that the people do not only make their laws, but they also execute them, and govern themselves. These considerations should have a tendency to discourage all officers of government from feeling themselves independent of their brethren, THE PEOPLE. With these proper views, they will be more likely to pay that attention to the wants and feelings of the people, which is necessary to increase the public happiness. When, therefore, the most exalted characters in authority feel themselves connected to the whole community by a brotherly, benevolent attachment; then the lives and the estates of the nation are most secure. In addition to this, it may also be said, that the administration of men in power will then be the most useful and honourable, when the affairs of government are conducted with moderation and justice: for the people have not appointed men to insult and injure them, but to promote their best interest. Violence

lence & compulsion will never advance the happiness of freemen. They will know when they are governed agreeably to their constitutions and laws : they will know when they enjoy a portion of that civil prosperity which they are entitled to by their rights and privileges : and they will easily know when they are treated with civility and kindness. The people should have reason to believe, that men in office have nothing more at heart than the felicity of the nation.

5. THE best measures should be adopted to establish esteem and confidence between the people and their rulers ; for without this favourable impression, there will be but little peace and satisfaction in the public mind. Great care should be taken not to disturb and irritate the temper of the people ; their patience should never be tortured ; but they should have as many reasons to be pleased with the transactions of government, as possible, consistent with the public welfare : for good humour and satisfaction greatly contribute to the peace and happiness of government and mankind. When the people have reasonable satisfaction and rest of mind, they will be more industrious, and consequently more virtuous : the produce of the land will be more plentiful ; and the strength and resources of the nation will be in proportion to the pleasure and encouragement of the mind. A free, willing, industrious, and virtuous
people,

people, well united and well pleased, are the strength of a nation; while the great wealth of a few luxurious, idle drones, are the great bane of Liberty.— A people with that happy temper of mind which I have described, will be cheerfully obedient to their laws; they will respect and esteem all their good civil officers; and peace and harmony will be pleasant and lasting.— The man, whom every benevolent, free and virtuous citizen respects and loves, suffer me to adorn my humble page with the name of WASHINGTON, hath declared, that, THE BEST WAY TO PRESERVE THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE DURABLY IS TO PROMOTE THEIR TRUEST INTEREST.

6. THE principles of a free people are directly opposed to taxation without their own consent by representation. Money should never be extorted by violence, but received as the gifts and free will offerings, or contributions of the people, to pay for the security of their persons and property. Let them be convinced, that the public demands are reasonable and necessary, not merely for the benefit of civil officers, but for the general advantage of the nation; and then as a free, enlightened, generous, virtuous people, they will take pleasure cheerfully to defray the necessary expenses of government. They will be pleased when they recollect, that for a very small portion of their property they can be secured in the
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real possession of all the blessings of true Liberty.--- But how will their pleasure rise still higher, when they consider, that by doing justice to their brethren, to whom they have committed the toils and dangers of public business; when they consider, I say, that by their contributions they advance not only the great prosperity of the nation, but include also their posterity in the general happiness. But here let it be observed, that no requisitions should be made but such as are really and absolutely necessary for the support and contingencies of government; and of the expenditure of money the people should have an account. Much the greater part of mankind toil severely for what property they acquire: it would therefore be very unjust and cruel to use it for the gratification of pampered pride and luxury. In a word, that government which improves the interest and happiness of the people, and manages their public affairs consistently with the principles of a generous œconomy, as well as a just and *magnanimous policy*, free from a prodigal and dishonest waste of the public wealth; such a government will furnish the most reasonable satisfaction, and will be the most valued and the most bravely defended.

III. UNDER this head of discourse, I will endeavour to shew when it may be said that a people *stand fast in the Liberty wherewith they are free*. With the prosecution

prosecution of this design, I will attempt to intermix the spirit and freedom of an APPLICATION.

1. THE people are in the habit and exercise of Liberty, when they resort to the first principles of government, and trace their rights up to God the Creator: when they exercise their natural power of framing any social compact conducive to the common interest: feel independent of all human power but that which flows from themselves: disdain the subjection of their consciences to any authority but the will of God: refuse to be controuled by the will of any man who claims an independent power of disposing of their lives and estates: recollect that they entered into society to have their natural rights, which are the basis of civil rights, secured. To maintain such principles of original justice, is to *stand fast* in the righteous Liberty of man. True Liberty suffers no man to be injured in his person, estate, or character: it encourages and enables him to improve his happiness; and, within the limits of the public good, insures to him every blessing to which imperfect human nature can attain. All the toils, sufferings, treasure and blood of men, are not lost, when they are the price and purchase of Liberty. Without religious and civil Liberty, we can have no security of life, or of any of the good things of God: we cannot practice the sentiments of our consciences:---

but where the rights of man are equally secured in the greatest degree, there is the greatest happiness... AND THAT IS OUR COUNTRY.

2. WHEN you carefully regard the election of your representatives and officers of government, you will *stand fast* in your Liberty. It is a darling privilege of all freemen to elect the best qualified men to represent them in a State or National Assembly. But ; do a people *stand fast* in the discharge of their duty ---are they in the exercise of their civil rights, when they neglect to choose men of established principles of Virtue and Liberty ? ; Do they wish to have good laws, and yet neglect to choose men who have proved themselves friends to the rights of their brethren ? ; Can they reasonably expect that good laws will proceed from men who *fear not God nor regard man* ? ; Will men, who feel no obligations of love and duty to their Creator, be good examples to their constituents ? ; Will they add any weight to the laws they assisted to make, when they are so prompt to violate them ? ; Do they not, as far as their influence will reach, defeat the very laws they voted for ? ; Will a public and patriotic spirit originate from vicious principles ? ; Is it natural for noble and generous sentiments to flow from vice ? ; Do not bad principles make men selfish, narrow the mind, and banish all benevolent propensities of doing good

good to men ? ; Will not the very knowledge which unprincipled men may have, degenerate into selfish low cunning, and serve only to embarrass and perplex the honesty and good common sense of men who are able and willing to promote the interest of society ?--- I need not tell you, that men under the influence of selfish passions, will sacrifice the best interest of their country, whenever they can greatly advance their own importance ; and, like a Dean and an Arnold, by the most infamous and horrible treason, betray that Liberty which they once pretended to defend.... Do any of the people ask me, as one of their brethren, ; Who are the men we must choose, in order to *stand fast* in our Liberty ? First, separate, in your minds, the most wicked and unprincipled men, from being objects of your choice ; and then, out of the rest, select men of understanding, for of such there will enough remain, who are actuated by principles of love and obedience to God, and animated by a generous benevolence to mankind ; who really love to see their brethren free and happy : for in this every benevolent man must take pleasure. Benevolent principles will produce the noblest acts of public and patriotic good ; they will enable men to discern easily the advantage of the people. “ For when private interest and private views are removed, it will be easy to know what is the public good.”—Let me beseech

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all the people to remember, that their safety and happiness in society depends upon the election of good and wise representatives. Under the smiles of providence, the prosperity of a free people is in their own hands; for they have knowledge enough, if well improved, to advance and secure their welfare. In a few words, choose the men to manage your public affairs, to whom you would not fear to entrust the most important concerns of a private nature. . . . This is the way to *stand fast* in your Liberty.

3. THE example of civil officers has great influence on the minds of mankind. They ought to be punctual in their observation of the laws of the country. As public men, or private citizens, they should be uniform in the practice of virtue, and the defence of Liberty. The people call them FATHERS: we are willing to be their political children, as long as they are good parents. But, ; Should not fathers be examples of goodness to their children? ; Will children do well, if the parents are wicked and do wrong? ; Will the children be obedient to the public laws, if the parents violate them? ; Will the children love Freedom, if the parents disregard it? ; Will the children cultivate a public spirit, if the parents are selfish? ; Do fathers love their children, and not strive in all respects to promote their felicity? It is most reasonable, therefore, to conclude, that it

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is the great and indispensable duty of rulers to encourage the practice of religion by their own influence and example: and I venture to declare, that no civil officer does the half of his duty, unless he endeavours to suppress vice and disorder, and so prevent the necessity of punishment. Mankind very quickly and justly exclaim against the absurdity of allowing those men to be teachers of religion, who live in the habitual practice of vice and wickedness: ; Shall we not, with equal justice, condemn the practice of those men who break through those restraints which were intended to suppress vice, and consequently encourage virtue? ; Should they not be *ministers of God for good* to the people, in every possible way? Every man of common sense acknowledges, that religion is very useful to mankind; and especially the precepts and truths of the gospel. It is also allowed, that public worship is of particular and national advantage. To favour and practice virtue is therefore to increase the public happiness, and to answer the intention of government: and by these means their own importance and authority will be increased.

4. WHEN the people are submissive to their laws and rulers, upon the principles already mentioned, their Liberties will be permanent. Where the true spirit of religion is united to the free and generous spirit of Liberty, obedience will be a pleasing duty.

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The author of our benevolent religion hath commanded us to *render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God, the things that are God's.* The apostles also say, *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. Render to all, their dues: tribute, to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom; fear, to whom fear; honour, to whom honour.* Men who are under the influence of reason and religion, will not blame the necessary measures of government. They will not be factious and turbulent, but of a reasonable and complying disposition. They will be influenced by such generous sentiments as the following: *Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.* We must endeavour to render ourselves extensively useful, and promote the good of our country; in which, not only our own happiness, but the happiness of millions, is included.

5. THE Liberties of a people cannot be lasting without knowledge. The human mind is capable of great cultivation. Knowledge is not only useful, but it adds dignity to man. When the minds of men are improved, they can better understand their rights ---they can know what part they are to act, in contributing to the welfare of the nation. Freemen should always acquire knowledge; this is a privilege and pleasure unknown to slaves; this elevates the
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mind of man; this creates a conscious dignity of his importance as a rational creature, and a free agent. The happiness of mankind has been much advanced by the arts and sciences; and they have flourished the most among freemen. Slavery blots the image of the Creator, which was at first impressed upon man: it banishes knowledge, and courts misery. But men, enlightened, pursue with ardour the knowledge and recovery of their rights. Liberty is enlightened by knowledge; and knowledge is nurtured by Liberty. Where there is wisdom, virtue, and Liberty, there mankind are MEN.---In all the dark ages of the world, tyranny has been established upon the slavish ignorance of mankind. Tyrants, in time past, secured their domination by darkening the minds of their subjects. In the present day, they tremble at the approaching light of knowledge and Liberty. They turn indignant from the glorious illuminations of America and France. They hear with horror the sound of Freedom and the rights of men. They would still imbrute the human race, and make mankind forget that they are men:—Be assured, my dear countrymen, knowledge is absolutely necessary to secure the blessings of Freedom. If you wish to see your country not only free in your day, but also to feast your imaginations with the pleasing prospect of a free posterity for many ages to come; let me entreat

treat you, to encourage and promote that knowledge
 which will enable the people successfully to watch all
 the enemies of Liberty, and guard against the designs
 of intriguing men. Unless the people have knowl-
 edge, they may be imposed upon by men who are
 always lying in wait to disturb the peace of society,
 create disorder and confusion, and, in the tumult,
 overturn the Liberties of the country. Be always
 awake to your own interest, and you will have noth-
 ing to fear: but if you sleep, the enemies of Liber-
 ty will awake:—sleep, and by your death-like slum-
 bers you will give them life: for Liberty has never
 yet appeared upon the face of the earth without
 meeting enemies to contend with:—There have been
 men in America, who have reprobated what they were
 pleased to call the inquisitive sauciness of the people,
 when they wished to know how the public affairs of
 the country were conducted, and how Justice and
 Liberty might be secured. Nay, some men, still
 more unjust and tyrannical, have ventured to say—
 blush! ye degenerate sons of free parents!—that the
 people, when in the possession of Liberty, are unable
 to use it for their own advantage, and therefore they
 ought to be governed against their wills, and without
 their choice, by men, to be sure, much wiser than
 themselves, and more disposed to do them good. This
 is as much as to say, that the people ought to be
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robbed of their natural rights for their own advantage and happiness. But whoever is acquainted with the history of despotic power, need not be informed, that a free people will always use their Freedom more consistently with the principles of justice and reason, than any men with uncontrouled power. It is a truth, and it is now too late to deny it, that no man, or body of men, are fit to be entrusted with unlimited power. This power they would most certainly abuse, whenever their unjust wills were in the least opposed. Let the youth be well educated in wisdom and virtue; let them be instructed in the true principles of Freedom, and they will improve their Liberty most agreeably to the rational happiness of mankind. In this free country, knowledge is peculiarly necessary, where no other qualifications are requisite, for the most important offices of government, but virtue and ability. I again say, let the children and youth be well educated. In the earliest stages of life, let a free and public spirit be infused into the youthful mind. This is the way to exclude from their young breasts all oppressing and cruel passions.--- Unless the doors of education are open to all the youth of the country equally, advantages may be taken by some men of cunning, to tyrannize over the rest, and become masters of their property. Every parent, and every friend to the Freedom of his

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country,

country, ought to be solicitous for the improvement of our youth in the principles of Freedom and good government, and then the people will *stand fast* in their Liberty for a long time; yes, as long as such principles are in their true exercise; and, with submission to the divine will, as long as they please.— But what! ; Shall I doubt the attention and exertions of my fellow-citizens to this all-important cause of public prosperity? ; Shall the children and youth of a free people be suffered to grow up ignorant of the value of those Liberties you intend to commit to their trust? ; Shall they be unfit to take care of those political blessings which have been secured for them at the great expense of much toil, treasure, and precious blood? Oh! Liberty, thou friend to mankind, forbid it; justice, thou guardian of the rights of men, forbid it; ye patriots and fathers of your country, forbid it: but rather let me say, Oh! thou blessed God, who takest no pleasure in the misery of thy children, forbid it, for the sake of him who *hath made us free.*

6. THE principles and practice of our peaceable and benevolent religion, are the foundation on which all the blessings of life and Liberty must *stand fast.* *Righteousness exalteth a nation.* True religion will incline a people to love and honour the MOST HIGH who *ruleth among the children of men.* The LORD hath said,

Righteousness exalteth a nation

said, *Them that honour me, I will honour.* Religion is intended to unite men together in the bonds of brotherly love and good will; to prevent bad habits; to suppress disorder; to calm factious spirits; and to put an end to the shedding of brothers' blood. The influence and importance of religion should be felt by men both in their family and national connections. Without it, they can neither be happy in this world nor in a future state.—May the benevolent efforts of all public teachers of true religion, be united with the affectionate influence of parents, to promote the personal and national welfare of our country. By instilling good sentiments into the tender minds of children and youth, you will teach them to *stand fast* in their Liberty. Good impressions, made in early life, are very frequently of lasting benefit both to individuals and the public. *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.* But, in addition to all your pious exertions, let me entreat you, never to forget to beseech the Father of mercies and the God of all grace, to implant in the hearts of our youth, by the divine Spirit, the true principles of holiness.

I HOPE it has been evident, that, in the whole body of this discourse, I have endeavoured to interweave sentiments of religion and virtue. I cannot, therefore, suppose it necessary at present, to prosecute this particular

particular article any farther. Permit me, however, to assure you, that I have not ventured nor wished to recommend Liberty without Virtue; for this would have been a recommendation of *licentiousness*. True Liberty may be summed up in this declaration: that we have a right to do all the good we can; but have no right to injure our fellow-men: we have a right to be as happy as we can; but no right to lessen the happiness of mankind.

Thus far I have attempted to comply with the appointment of the civil Fathers of this State. In this compliance, my diffidence and fear have given me no small anxiety, lest I should not answer the design of their appointment. I have not, therefore, been influenced by a presuming expectation of communicating to this honourable political body, any new information. I feel, nevertheless, in my mind, a pleasing persuasion, that my Fathers in government will not be displeased with any sincere and humble attempt to inspire their younger sons with a just sense of the blessings and privileges they enjoy under the present legislative and executive authority. In a few years, some of the youth of the present day must be called to fill the places of the Fathers now in office.--- The thought is serious! ; Who knows the consequence? ; Is it not then of the utmost importance, that the minds of young men should be impressed with

with the best sentiments of equal Liberty? Shall we not exhort them to *stand fast* in their Liberty, that their country may be free? Shall we not animate the rising generation, to transmit to their posterity that invaluable inheritance of Freedom, which they must soon receive from the present race of patriots when they shall rest from their labours? — This is a day of joy: it reminds you of one of the great privileges of freemen:—it should be a day of gratitude also. Oh! that you did but feel and realize your happy situation, that you might send up to Heaven the warmest gratitude of hearts glowing with love and praise to that blessed Saviour who *bath made us FREE!*

FATHERS, brethren, and fellow-citizens, with the happy feelings of a brother freeman, I congratulate you on the enjoyment of that Liberty which I have been describing: it involves in it every thing most conducive to your peace and prosperity on earth:—clasp it to your bosoms, and religiously swear, that you will live freemen, or die bravely. I rejoice, that it is in your power, under God, to *stand fast* in your Liberty. — Shall I contrast your present situation with the deplorable state of man in ages past? Would not this draw a cloud of grief over the bright sunshine of your happy feelings? We rejoice, that the earth hath been delivered from the hands of those
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inhuman butchers, whose unrelenting murders have filled so many bloody pages of history; who slaughtered millions of the human race, for no other purpose but to extend their cruel and ambitious power, and oppress and lay waste the world. Tyrants, who, instead of being transmitted down to us with illustrious names, for being the most successful destroyers of their fellow-creatures, should be named after the most furious beasts of prey; and, on account of the mischief they have done to mankind, be classed with tempests, earthquakes, and plagues. We rejoice, with thankful hearts, that we are not under the power of such plagues of the human race, who wage war with the peace and happiness of mankind; who think it an act of heroism to depopulate whole countries to gratify private revenge. We now see that the patriotic resolutions of our countrymen have not been in vain: we now see that the treasures expended in the defence of Liberty, have realized a national interest of more value than ten thousand per cent: we now see that the inexpressible trials and sufferings of a patriot army, have been productive of the richest fruits; and that the blood of our heroes has been the seed of Liberty.—But, we commiserate the deplorable condition of many of our fellow-men, who now groan under the heavy chains of despotism: we wish the rights of men may be soon restored to them. —————

BUT

BUT I return from this digression. I find political happiness not abroad, but at home. Happy age and country in which we live! We remember no æra since the creation of the world, so favourable to the rights of mankind as the present. The histories of mankind, with only a few exceptions, are the records of human guilt, oppression, and misery. Although some shadow of rude Liberty was contended for by a few small uncivilized tribes of men, yet they were subjected by those nations who were more powerful. At the beginning of the Christian æra, almost two thirds of mankind were in the most abject and cruel slavery. The Grecian and Roman nations, notwithstanding their boasted love of Liberty, were not acquainted with the true principles of original, equal, and sentimental Liberty. Though an imperfect civilization had made some progress among them, yet they neither understood the nature, nor practised the duties, of humanity. They who are acquainted with the true history of Greece and Rome, need not be informed, that the cruelty they exercised upon their slaves, and those taken in war, is almost beyond the power of credibility. The proud and selfish passions have always endeavoured to suppress the spirit of Freedom. Even Rome herself, while she pretended to glory in being free, endeavoured to subject and enslave the rest of mankind.—But no longer shall

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we look to antient histories for principles and systems of pure Freedom. The close of the eighteenth century, in which we live, shall teach mankind to be truly free. The Freedom of America and France, shall make this age memorable. From this time forth, men shall be taught, that true greatness consists not in destroying, but in saving, the lives of men; not in conquering, but making them free; not in making war, but making peace; not in making men ignorant, but making them wise; not in firing them with brutal rage, but in making them humane; not in being ambitious, but in being good, just, and virtuous. Of France, it may be said, in the language of Scripture, *Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Or, Shall a nation be born at once?* Behold a nation of freemen, rising out of a nation of slaves! This gratifies the feelings of humanity and benevolence. We wish to see all men independent of all things but the laws of God, and the just laws of their country. And will any man blame me for saying, that, in America, every friend to justice and the rights of men wishes prosperity to that generous nation, who are allied to these United States, and who so powerfully aided them in securing their independence and peace. In the name of the Lord of hosts, let us pray, that *no weapon that is formed against their Freedom, shall prosper.*

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I ONCE more invite you to join me in gratitude to that best of Beings, by whose providential goodness and power *the lines are fallen unto us in pleasant places ; yea, we have a goodly heritage.* Here harvests grow for the free and cheerful husbandman : here, neither awed by lordly and rapacious injustice, nor dejected by beholding idleness high fed and fattened on the labours of other men, they reap and enjoy the pleasing fruits of their honest industry. *Ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land of safety.* Here the people dwell together as brethren ; peace, harmony, industry, and health, unite their various gifts to make this life a blessing : here poor human nature, in other parts of the world long depressed by ignorance and enslaving power, seems to reclaim the primitive blessings of creation, and to rejoice that it was made *in the image of God* : here conscience assumes her first authority ; religion is no longer enslaved to the wills and laws of men ; public and private happiness are guarded by the laws and government of the people.—*Stand fast, therefore, in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.* Let us determine to be free from the unjust power of men, and free from the slavery and tyranny of sin, and we shall then be truly free. *If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

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WITH the words of a celebrated French writer, this discourse will be concluded.

“YE people of Northamerica, let the example of all nations who have gone before you, and above all that of Greatbritain, serve you for instruction. Fear the affluence of gold, which brings with luxury the corruption of manners, the contempt of laws. Fear a too unequal distribution of riches, which exhibits a small number of citizens in opulence, and a great multitude of citizens in extreme poverty; whence springs the insolence of the former, and the debasement of the latter. Secure yourselves against the spirit of conquest. The tranquillity of an empire diminishes in proportion to its extension. Have arms for your defence; have none for offence. Seek competency and health in labour; prosperity in the culture of lands, and the workshops of industry; power in manners and virtue. Cause arts and sciences, which distinguish the civilized from a savage man, to flourish and abound. Above all, watch carefully over the education of your children. It is from public schools, be assured, that come the wise magistrates, the capable and courageous soldiers, the good fathers, the good husbands, the good brothers, the good friends, the good men. Wherever the youth are seen depraved, the nation is on the decline. Let Liberty have an immoveable foundation in the wisdom of
your

your laws, and let it be the indestructible cement to bind your States together. Establish no legal preference amongst the different forms of worship. Superstition is innocent, wherever it is neither persecuted nor protected; and may your duration, if it be possible, equal the duration of the world!"

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